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# Written statement* submitted by the Federacion de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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# Human Rights Situation in Western Sahara

Saharawi political prisoners, who are still imprisoned in the local prison of the Moroccan city of Salé since 2010-2011, are serving very hard sentences ranging between 20 years to life imprisonment. This unbearable harsh verdict stems from the fact that they all have been Human Rights activists who participated in the biggest peaceful protest ever, which was held in the outskirts of Laayoune, known as the Gdeim Izik camp, in October 2010. In this protest camp, more than 20.000 Saharawi people decided to leave the city in protest of their intolerable socio-economic situation.

After one month of protest, this camp was brutally dismantled, with a lot of causalities among civilians.
The group of 21 Saharawi political prisoners are civilians tried in a military court. Right now, they just finished serving five years in prison, and still have many years to come to serve for some of them, according to their sentences, despite the recognition and the reporting of the International Community that it was an illegal trial which did proceeded without presentation of any evidence, and was only based on confessions extracted under extreme torture.

These torture cases were reported to the Committee against Torture, and include: techniques of suffocation, electrocution, rape with objects like broken bottles and chair legs, cigarette burns, forced extension of the male members, intake of urine and faeces, burns and poisoning with chemical products and pulling out nails and so on. These cases of torture resulted in permanent scars which were exhibited by the prisoners in the court and witnessed by more than 40 international observers. Despite the calls of the prisoners to the judge to investigate their claims, the latter denied any medical expertise. The Moroccan parliament itself passed a law in August 2014 outlawing this trial, which meant that either the political prisoners would be released or moved to a new process in civil court. This was not done and the process in the parliament is still waiting for ratification from the Higher Chamber.

The situation in the prisons where Saharawi political prisoners are held, have not improved. The ill treatments continue on a daily basis against them. Medical assistance is denied to most of them and when they receive some kind of medical attention, it is inadequate, insufficient, and in some cases, the medicines that they receive are completely unrelated to the illnesses they have.

Overmedication cases are also omnipresent, and one good example can be found in the case of a prisoner who received 18 different types of medicine, among them, 3 different antibiotics with major side effects. When some kind of blood tests, x-rays or other analyses are made, the results are not given to the prisoner, or to his family or lawyer. The abusive use of x-rays is also very common.
Mr. Sidi Abdejalil Laaroussi, a political prisoner in the prison Sale 1, near Rabat, needs urgent medical attention.

Prisoners' names and number of children:

**Life imprisonment:**

- Mohamed Bani: 3 daughters and 3 sons
- Abdallah Abahah: none
- Mohamed Elbachir Boutengiza: none
- Abdeljelil Laarousi: 2 sons
- Brahim Elismaaili: 2 sons and 2 daughters
- Sid Ahmed Lemjyid: none
- Abdallah Lakhfauni: none
- Ahmed Asbai: none

**30 years sentence:**

- Cheikh Banga: none
- Naame Asfari: none
- Hassana Dah: none
- Mohamed Burial: 2 sons

**25 years sentence:**

- Abdallah Atoubali – none
- Mohamed Embarek Lefkir – none
- Mohamed Lamin Heddi – none
- Mohamed Khouna Babait - a daughter
- Elhoussen Azaui - 3 daughters
- Adeich Addafi – none
- Bakay El Arabi – 2 daughters

The International Community has to intervene in order to put an end to the violations committed by Morocco's criminal law that is applied on the Western Sahara inhabitants.

The international conventions signed by Morocco, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966), the International Agreements on Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Agreement for the Prevention and Sanction of the Crime of Genocide and Crime of Tortures (rectified by Morocco in1950) are totally ignored and violated by Morocco.
The Saharawi political prisoners of the Gdeim Izik Group have to be freed at once. Their trial was null and void in the eyes of International Law as they have been subjected to all forms of psychological and physical abuses.

This situation is caused because of the lack of the political will, and because of the non-implementation of the Resolutions of the UN that calls for the right of self-determination of the Saharawi People.